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A Defense by Kirkpatrick

ROSLYN HARBOR, May 9 (AP) In a eulogy, Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, the former chief United States delegate to the United Nations, defended Mr. Casey's role in the Iran-contra matter.

"Supporting Nicaragua's freedom fighters had a special priority for him, no question about it," Mrs. Kirkpatrick told the mourners. "But they had no more priority than the law."

A crowd of about 200 people, some waving American flags, gathered to meet the Reagans' helicopter from Kennedy International Airport at a marina landing zone near here. Other people lined the road to the church and waved at the motorcade as it made the five-minute drive to the church.

The President's visit brought tight security measures, with only invited guests allowed. Burial followed at Holy Rood Cemetery, Westbury.

Closed-circuit television was installed in the church basement for the expected crowd.

Mr. Casey, who died at the age of 74, was described as a "larger than life" leader of the Central Intelligence Agency by Senator Patrick J. Leahy, Democrat of Vermont. Mr. Leahy suggested that Mr. Casey knew more about the Iran-Nicaragua matter than anyone with the exception of Lieut. Col. Oliver L. North of the Martines, who was dismissed from the National Security Council for his role in the deal.

Mr. Casey collapsed from a brain seizure in December, just before he was scheduled to testify before a Congressional committee on the diversion of money from Iranian arms sales to the Nicaraguan rebels. He underwent surgery for removal of a cancerous brain tumor, and resigned as the C.I.A. chief on Feb. 2.

Mr. Casey, a less than imposing figure kept out of combat by poor eyesight in World War II, joined the Office of Strategic Services in 1943 and became a spy. He and several secret agents were sent to enter Nazi Germany near the end of the war.